

The Kentucky Alternative Recovery Effort (KARE) for Nurses is a program developed and offered by the Kentucky Board of Nursing. The purpose of KARE for Nurses is to identify and assist nurses whose abilities to provide nursing care are compromised by dependency on drugs or alcohol so that they can return to competent and safe practice.

The program recognizes that nurses are individuals who have dedicated their lives to helping others and are now in a need of help. KARE for Nurses's foundation is that substance abuse is treatable and that the recovery and return of competent nursing practice is in the best interest of the nurse and public health.

The KARE for Nurses program believes that a nurse should not lose a job or license due to substance abuse and offers an opportunity for encouragement, treatment and recovery. The program emphasizes hope and is administered with compassion, confidentiality, concern and dignity for the nurse.

To obtain further information or to make a confidential referral, please contact:

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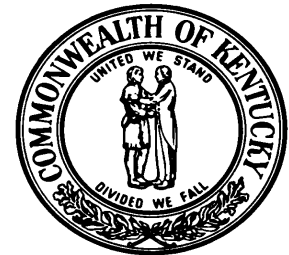
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Kentucky Alternative Recovery Effort (KARE) for Nurses

A confidential program to help nurses with chemical dependency to return to safe nursing practice.



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The Disease

Many people believe that nurses are immune from addiction by essence of their intelligence and education. In reality, exposure, easy availability, and familiarity with medications often lead predisposed health professionals to develop chemical dependency.

Substance abuse is one of the major factors threatening safe nursing practice. Chemical dependency is a chronic, progressive illness characterized by the use of chemicals in spite of adverse consequences. This compulsive-use cycle may have periods where use is controlled, but it is normally followed by at least one episode of out-of-control use causing adverse consequences in one's life.

Not recognizing or dealing with chemical dependency will exacerbate the problem. Often we are too engrossed in our own problems to be objective and our individual efforts result in more stress which increases the severity of the situation. Left untreated, chemical dependency will not only risk your life, but the life and safety of patients.

There is a place to turn for help.

Nurses often buy into the myth that they should be able to handle their chemical dependency because they are health care providers. What may seem a tremendous burden to one person can become a lighter load when shared with someone else.

The first step is to admit there is a problem. It isn't easy to admit to another person that we are having trouble handling our problems alone. It is a subject that we avoid discussing or confronting. Yet once we reach that first step, we can begin the process of regaining our life back.

Services

KARE for Nurses develops individualized Program Agreements based upon the unique circumstances of the nurse. Monitoring can be facilitated in many ways, some which are listed below:

- Assistance with identification, assessment and referral to approved treatment providers
- Monitoring participants compliance during recovery and continued nursing practice
- Provide education to nurses, employers and other groups about the program
- Provide encouragement and support to help ensure the participants are able to practice nursing in accordance with acceptable and prevailing standards of safe nursing care

Confidentiality

Requests for information and/or assistance are strictly confidential. All records of program participants are confidential. Participation in the KARE for Nurses Program is voluntary and will remain anonymous to the Kentucky Board of Nursing as long as the participant is compliant with the terms of the program agreement.

Eligibility

A nurse may access the program by self-referral, board referral, referral from another person or agency, such as an employer, coworker or family member. Admission to the KARE for Nurses program is available to individuals who, at the time of application, meet the requirements listed below:

- Registered nurse, or licensed practical nurse, licensed in the Commonwealth of Kentucky or an applicant for a credential issued by the board;
- Request participation in the program regardless of whether referred by the board, self, or another person;
- Admit in writing to being a chemically dependent individual;
- Have not been terminated from a similar program in this or any other state for noncompliance;
- Have attended an approved treatment provider;
- Obtain a chemical dependency assessment, which includes a complete physical and psychosocial evaluation performed by a licensed or certified medical or psychological specialist in the field of drug, alcohol, or other chemical dependency;
- Agree to the terms set forth in the agreement; and
- Agree not to be employed in any capacity in a patient care setting or one which requires licensure until approved to do so by the program staff.